

Your safe drinking water



the
Animas
River
spill
2015

The Animas River is the raw water supply for public drinking water systems and wells in the Durango region. Many citizens get their drinking water from a regulated public water system. Some may get drinking water from a private well or a small water company not large enough to be regulated. Concerned citizens near the Animas River should learn the source of their drinking water to understand how water may be impacted by the mine release.

Who provides my drinking water?

If you receive a water bill, then you are connected to a public drinking water system. If your water bill is included in association dues, contact the manager to determine whose system provides your water. If you do **not** receive a bill, you could be served by a private well. The Colorado Department of Water Resources permits private wells. See the private well section on the reverse side for more information.

What's in my drinking water?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment helps ensure safe drinking water to every person served by a public water system. Every year systems are required to provide customers with a consumer confidence report that details what's in the water and reports any system violations. You can get a copy of the report from your water system.

Routine sampling is done on water systems throughout the year. After the mine release, additional sampling was completed to monitor possible adverse affects from the spill. The results of all samples after the spill are posted at: www.colorado.gov/cdphe/animas-river-water-quality-sampling-data.

Timeline

On August 5, 2015, work at the Gold King mine outside of Silverton, CO led to a large release of mine waste water into this river. Public drinking water systems using the river were asked to close intake structures from the river to protect their source water.

On August 12, 2015 CDPHE notified the City of Durango that public water systems were authorized to open their intake structures.

Drinking water impact questions



Source: public water system



What is a public water system?

Public water systems serve at least 25 customers 60 days out of the year. CDPHE regulates these systems to ensure safe drinking water.



Source: private well



Well permitting and regulation

CDPHE does not regulate private wells. The Colorado Division of Water Resources regulates well permitting. Information about permitted wells can be found online at:

www.dwr.state.co.us/WellPermitSearch

Is your well near the Animas River?

If your well is in close proximity to the Animas River, it may be influenced by river water. Please call the **EPA hotline at (844) 607-9700** to request sampling by the EPA. Residents should not take their own samples; technicians will be sent to sample water.

After the spill



Is my drinking water safe?

The Water Quality Control Division quickly notifies public water systems after spills are reported to the 24-hour incident reporting telephone hotline.

After the Animas River spill, all downstream systems were notified. CDPHE deployed a team of professionals to respond to the spill within 48 hours. They worked closely with potentially affected public water systems to perform water quality sampling and evaluations.

Detailed information on the processes used to sample and process water quality tests, data and information is available on the department website. You can also contact your system for specific information regarding its response.

What did the samples include?

Sampling analysis included contaminants typically found in mine drainage such as aluminum, antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, boron, cadmium, calcium, chromium, cobalt, copper, iron, lead, molybdenum, magnesium, manganese, mercury, nickel, potassium, selenium, silicon, silver, sodium, strontium, thallium, titanium, uranium, vanadium, and zinc. Analysis also included pH and hardness.

How will I be informed of problems?

After the Animas River spill, systems using the river directly were asked to close intake structures to protect drinking water sources. After sampling, results showed water quality was not a threat and could be treated for distribution to customers. When exactly to utilize the Animas River is up to each public water system. For most systems, regular water treatment operations have resumed.

CDPHE maintains routine water quality testing requirements for systems and closely monitors all results. If a health threat is identified (for example, a water sample exceeds state regulated limits for a pollutant), the system is required to notify all customers of the potential health impact and advise customers of steps they can take to protect themselves until the threat is resolved.



COLORADO

Water Quality Control Division

Department of Public Health & Environment

www.colorado.gov/cdphe/animas-river-spill

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